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Lawson G. Stone

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OT 520 FOUNDATIONS FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

June 2001—A Three Hour Course Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

E-mail: within ATS Mail System: Lawson Stone
From Outside: lawson_stone@asburyseminary.edu

Office: BC 335
Phone: 859-858-2271

Course Aspirations and Place in the Curriculum

Aspirations: OT 520 seeks to equip students for ministry by providing selected tools fundamental to responsible interpretation of the OT. The course neither offers a comprehensive approach, nor emphasizes direct textual study, but *enhances* both by developing a framework within which competent interpretation can take place. Students explore contemporary approaches to the literary character, historical and cultural setting, composition, authorship, and literary unity of these books, their various literary types, settings, and functions, and how these affect Christian reading of the OT. Students who realize these aspirations will be able to :

1. Show how a close reading of the the OT itself provides the stimulus and basis for OT studies;
2. Illustrate how a knowledge of Hebrew and sensitivity to the OT's literary character enhance OT study;
3. Employ specific knowlege of the the historical and cultural setting of selected OT books, traditions, and personages to illuminate passages of scripture;
4. Apply to selected texts of scripture a grasp of the background, concepts, and procedures and major claims of selected types of OT study: These include archeology, Textual criticism, Source criticism, Form criticism, Redaction criticism, Selected contemporary literary approaches.
5. Identify, clarify, and strengthen essential convictions regarding *biblical theology and authority*;
6. Discover study as a means of spiritual growth. This involves seeing our work as:
 - a. "Studying (hurry, hasten, be eager, take pains, make every effort) to show yourself approved unto God, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining (cut a path in a straight direction, cut a road across country, guide along the right path) the word of truth;" (2 Tim. 2:15)
 - b. Exploring practically how to love God with all our *mind* (dianoia) (Matt. 22:37));
7. Embrace and seek to exemplify certain integrative aspirations distinctive of ATS, including:
 - a. The implications of our commitment to the *Bible* as "the foundation, controlling center and formative concern of the entire curriculum (Catalogue, p. 15)."
 - b. The centrality in ATS' history, identity, and destiny of the *doctrine and experience of Entire Sanctification*.
 - c. The lost art of *expository preaching* as the norm and standard for pulpit ministry;
 - d. In opening prayers and openness to God's grace, seeking renewal in learning by the *revival spirit* which birthed this institution. Far from obstructing the full use of critical reason, revival should rather energize and focus it!

The instructor prays this course fosters theological, intellectual, and spiritual renewal at ATS.

Means of Realizing Course Aspirations

READING in the literature of OT studies from many perspectives, from “mainstream” (i.e. non-conservative) OT criticism as well as evangelical scholars. Some readings *are difficult* and not always *obviously* relevant to, say, sermon preparation or youth ministry.

Basic Textbook:

Dillard, R. B. and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

A traditional OT introduction written by two evangelical scholars. An “introduction” to the OT is not a guide to the uninformed, but is a summary of current scholarly opinion about the authorship, date, origins, and composition of each OT book and the issues involved in their interpretation.

Required Supplementary Texts: Three additional textbooks are required for this course

W. W. Klein, C. L. Blomberg, R. L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco: Word, 1993.

Introduces essential issues involved in biblical interpretation and the methods employed with specific types of material. Students may *omit* sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament.

F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations : The History of Israel from the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple*. InterVarsity, 1998.

This is a very fine short presentation of the history of biblical Israel. The middle section of the class will take you rather quickly through this material.

V. H. Matthews, D. C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel: 150-587 BCE*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.

In the lectures, we will take a rapid overview, in chronological order, of the world of the OT. This book complements that by covering the world of the OT from the perspective of social settings and institutions.

Several articles are in electronic form and will be on the lecture drive of the ATS Intranet

Required Access to Reference Materials: You will sometimes need to use one of the following multi-volume Bible encyclopedia sets. No substitutes are permitted. You do not have to own these, but they are a worthy addition to your library. Often one or the other is available in public libraries. The :Asbury Bookstore can facilitate purchase should you wish to do so, as well as other dealers in theological books.

The Anchor Bible Encyclopedia. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD-ROM for Windoze or PowerPC Macs running a Wintel emulation program .

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988. 4 Volumes.

Recommended Bibliographical Resource: Bauer, David. *Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Wilmore, Revised 2nd Edition, 1995.

LECTURES are a vital component of the course. Note that instead of directly expounding readings, lecture often presents *analyses* of issues and supplementary material.

“Excused absences” are a normal part of academic life, but attendance is vital. Each day carries a full week of material, so more than 1 absence begins to cost students dearly. More than 2 absences will result in a lowering of the final grade by a degree, i.e. B+>B.

Three Open Book/Notes Essays will be assigned, each of which will be 1200-1600 words. These papers will be practicum exercises in which students will work with a passage of scripture or problem of biblical interpretation posed by the instructor in the light of specific issues focused in class. Students may consult class notes and textbooks, but no other sources unless the instructions so direct, for writing these essays. These are to represent your *very best thought and work*. Essays are to be the *student's own work* and students are asked not to consult, give, or receive any advice in conjunction with these essays. *The essay topic and instructions will be posted on the Intranet "lectures" folder 1 week before it is due, per the schedule below. They will not be distributed in class.* Assignments will be in the form of Microsoft Word documents, which can be read on any workstation on campus and printed out.

While readings are correlated to specific days, it is recognized that students will not always be able to read the exact assignments for each day. If an article is part of a particular day's reading assignment, students will find the article especially helpful and relevant for that day and would profit from having read it prior to class. What is **required**, though, is that *when you submit essays, indicate your completion of reading assigned to that date as a percentage*. Failure to complete reading assigned to that point will result in a reduction of that essay's grade.

Grade Calculation: Essays will be given letter grades. They contribute toward your final grade in the following proportions. Note they increase through the term, so that a weak early performance can often be compensated for by harder work on subsequent essays:

Essay 1 -----25%

Essay 2 -----30%

Essay 3 -----45%

Essays may be submitted two ways. *First*, you can print it out, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and submit it on the due date by 12:00 noon, either in class, or at my office. Comments and grade will be written on the paper and it will be returned via the SPO.

Second, work may be submitted electronically. At this time, I can only accept work produced on Microsoft Word 98(or earlier), not Word Perfect, Works, or any other word processing program (Mac or Windows is fine). If you can submit a document in MS Word, there are several advantages to you. *First, submission is easier.* Just attach your document to an e-mail and send it to me via your ATS FirstClass free e-mail account.

NOTE: I cannot support any other e-mail system than FirstClass due to complications, especially with AOL, in how attachments are handled.

No submissions on disk, please. A second advantage is that I will place my comments and grade on your paper via MS Word's "Comments" feature, which allows direct commenting on a

document. I then return your paper via an E-mail attachment and you open it in MS Word and you'll see some words are highlighted. Placing your mouse pointer over the highlighted word will reveal the comment.

Office Hours will be announced, but you are welcome at any time to call or e-mail me with a question or to make an appointment.

Course Assignment Due dates

The outline of the course and modules of study are listed below. It is very important for students to establish a regular discipline of work and study. This is graduate school, brothers and sisters! It will require of all of us discipline and effort, but working together we can achieve great things.

Sequence of Lecture Unit Topics

The outline below provides a picture of the structure and flow of the course's lecture topics. Note that not all blocks of lecture are the same length, and so some will be combined in due-dates. The schedule of online assignments and turned-in work is on the last page. The assignments are sequenced so that much reading is done early in the course, gradually tapering a bit toward the end as you collapse in complete exhaustion.

I. DIVINE REVELATION IN HUMAN LITERATURE: THE BASICS OF OT STUDY

- A. Who Needs the Old Testament? (Unit 1)
- B. Who Needs This thing called "Criticism?" (Unit 2)
- C. A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation (Unit 3)

II. SEVEN HISTORICAL TAPESTRIES FOR READING THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Tapestry 1: A Long Time Ago, In A Civilization Far, Far, Away (Unit 4)
- B. Tapestry 2: Prince of Egypt? (Unit 5)
- C. Tapestry 3: The Godfather? (Unit 6)
- D. Tapestry 4: The Blues Brothers: Who's On A Mission from God? (Unit 7)
- E. Tapestry 5: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence (Unit 8)
- F. Tapestry 6: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile (Unit 9)
- G. Tapestry 7: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration (Unit 10)

III. FIVE CRITICAL VIEWPOINTS FOR STUDYING THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. View 1: Textual Criticism: A Text in the Making (Unit 11)
- B. View 2: Source Criticism: Discovering the Diversity of the OT (Unit 12)
- C. View 3: Form Criticism: The Life Behind the Literature (Unit 13)
- D. View 4: Redaction Criticism: Out of Diversity, Unity (Unit 14)
- E. View 5: Literary Criticism: The Rhetoric of Divine Rule (Unit 15)

Revised Schedule of Units and Assignments

Due to a medical emergency in my family, I am having to substitute for my father-in-law in a speaking engagement June 9-15, thus will be absent 12-15. This involves a loss of 10 contact-hours. We will make up this time two ways. First, class will begin at 8:20 rather than 8:30, and will run until 11:20, rather than 11:00. Over the course of the 3 weeks I will be in town, we will be able to make up 6 contact hours. The other 4 hours will be made up via videotaped lectures that will be on reserve for you to view at your convenience during the week of my absence. I strongly suggest you use the week of my absence to get substantially ahead in your reading. This will greatly assist your work for the rest of the month.

I regret this and can only assure you that the situation causing it is of grave concern to my family.

Week One: 5-8, 2001

Course Introduction, **Unit 1 "Why the OT"**

Unit 2: Why Interpretation?

Read: William Robertson Smith, "Biblical Criticism and the Theology of the Reformation" in the online lecture folder file ROBSMITH.DOC

Blomberg-Klein-Hubbard, pages xxi-51, and Dillard-Longman, pages 17-36

Unit 3: A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation

Read: Dillard and Longman, 37-56; Blomberg, Klein, Hubbard, 53-151; Bruce/Payne, 1-8; Matthews/Benjamin "Introductin" and 1-36

Unit 4: A Long Time Ago, in a Civilization Far, Far, Away

Read: Bruce/Payne none; Matthews/Benjamin 37-81; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 152-183; Dillard/Longman 57-90

Unit 5: Prince of Egypt?

Bruce/Payne 9-31; Matthews/Benjamin 82-120; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 184-214; Dillard/Longman 91-128

Essay 1 Assignment Will be Posted on Wednesday June 6

Week Two: Tuesday June 12-15, 2001

Professor speaking at Christian Businessmens Committee Family Camp June 9-15

Unit 6: The Godfather? Videotaped Lectures

Bruce/Payne 32-58; Matthews/Benjamin 121-154; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 259-284; Dillard/Longman 129-168, chapters on Psalms, Proverbs

Unit 7: The Blues Brothers: Who's Really on a Mission From God?

Bruce/Payne 59-73; Matthews/Benjamin 155-186; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard None (Do I hear "Amen!"; Dillard/Longman: Amos, Hosea, Micah

ESSAY 1 DUE By 12:00 noon Wednesday, June 13

Essay 2 will be posted Thursday, June 14.

Week Three: Tuesday June 19-22, 2001

Unit 8: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence

Bruce/Payne, 74-89; Matthews/Benjamin, 187-226; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 284-322
Dillard/Longman, Chapters on: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah

Unit 9: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile

Bruce/Payne 90-123
Matthews/Benjamin, 227-252
Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 377-400
Dillard/Longman, Chapters on Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Jonah, Job, Ecclesiastes

Unit 10: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration

Reading: Dillard/Longman, chapters on Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Unit 11 Textual Criticism

Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 401-426
Dillard/Longman, 17-36

DO NOT FREAK OVER THE READINGS. You're not tested on them. Read them for the main ideas and issues.

Unit 12a Unity and Diversity in the OT: Source Criticism

Read: the document *Redcrit.doc*, which is the next chapter in the book on redaction criticism. It discusses the procedure more specifically and with examples.

Read also the WORD document *Source/Form.doc* posted on Intranet Lectures. This is a chapter from a book I am writing on redaction criticism, and it summarizes the tasks of source criticism and form criticism in order to lay a foundation for approaching the more synthetic task of redaction criticism.

Essay Three will be posted June 21

Essay Two Due Friday June 22, 12:00 noon

Week Four: June 26-29, 2001

Unit 12b Authorship and Authority: Assessing Source Criticism

Unit 13 The Life Behind the Literature: Form Criticism

On the Lecture Drive: "Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History" H. Gunkel
(GUNKEL.DOC)

Unit 14 From Analysis to Synthesis: Redaction Criticism

Read: the document *Redcrit.doc*, which is the next chapter in the book on redaction criticism. It discusses the procedure more specifically and with examples.

Unit 15 A Depth Approach to Surface Meaning? Literary Criticism

Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 427-458.

ESSAY 3 DUE Friday June 29, 12:00 noon